

THE STORY OF SENSA
AN INTERPRETATION OF THE
IDYLL OF THE WHITE LOTUS

MABEL COLLINS

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THE STORY OF SENSA

AN INTERPRETATION OF
THE IDYLL OF THE WHITE LOTUS

BY

*Con-*MABEL (COLLINS) *Collins*

A THREEFOLD NARRATIVE

1. A STORY OF BLACK MAGIC IN ANCIENT EGYPT.
2. THE INITIATIONS OF AN EGYPTIAN HEIROPHANT.
3. THE TRAGEDY AND APOTHEOSIS OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

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THE STORY OF SENSA

An Interpretation of
The Idyll of the White Lotus

CHAPTER I.

THE story of Sensa, as told with marvelous and mystic art in *The Idyll of the White Lotus* contains within itself three narratives, separate yet inseparable, united in their very nature and essence, as are the three leaflets of the trefoil clover. They cannot be taken apart, but they can be looked upon separately and in each is contained something vital which appeals to the deepest part of the human nature within ourselves. No student of occultism who has once read this Idyll and penetrated within any part of its mystic veil, can forget it or be parted

from it, because it relates his own story, the tragedy and ultimate apotheosis of his own soul, and is therefore an essential part of himself.

I am able to write of the Idyll as a critic and a student, not as its author in any sense, because I simply placed it upon paper in human language, as it was told to me in the mystical and universal language, when my personality was in the state known to the occultists of Southern India as "swapna"—obscurely translated into English by the words "somnambulic clairvoyance." In 1878 I was deeply engrossed in literary work which kept me constantly at my writing table, and from the window of the room I worked in I saw Cleopatra's Needle brought up the river and set up upon the Embankment. A procession of superb Egyptian priests began from that time to

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come into my room—coming up the staircase and entering the door—and stood around my table. I thought at first it was the appearance of astral forms connected with the Needle. But as these mysterious visits continued and culminated in a great effort, it is evident that if they were astral forms they were animated and directed by the egos to which they belonged, and were indeed the Kas of certain priests of ancient Egypt. It is of course known as a fact that the religious Egyptians understood that the Ka or astral form of a person who had lived a spiritual life could be used by the ego of that person for great purposes if carefully preserved and protected. Also it has been stated that the Ka or astral form exists to serve the purpose of supplying information with regard to events on the physical

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plane to its ego in Devachan. This seems to be what took place in this case, and when the hour was ripe the ego came to the place where its work had to be done, and aroused the ego within myself so that I stood out of myself to receive the message, and wrote it down upon the paper on my table, arresting the thinking principle of my brain in its action while this was accomplished. Thus the story was passed from the higher consciousness to the lower, intact and perfect. The "Ka" of the Ancient Egyptians is the "astral form" of the Theosophists, the "spook" of the spiritualist's séance room, the "ghost" of all time and all countries. It was regarded by the Egyptians as earth-bound, unenlightened, ignorant and retaining the lowest of the physical desires of the man. They had an object

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in keeping it imprisoned in the tomb of the body, and they therefore provided it with amusements and pleasures there to prevent its roaming about and perhaps seeking still less desirable gratifications. They had an elaborate ritual by which they kept it there instead of allowing it to become disintegrated on the astral plane. This was done because they held that the ego in its high place might in the future need its services upon earth, and come to seek it; and they believed that from time to time this occurred. Of course the priests's knowledge of magic and the mysteries of the after life was regarded as great enough to establish and hold such a connection over the centuries. The shapes of priests who came into my room and stood around my table before the *Idyll of the White Lotus* was written were not seen by others; it re-

quired "waking clairvoyance" (*jagrat*) to perceive them; but still, they were ghosts, pure and simple, the shades of the dead. But, as no doubt the ego of a great adept undertook the task of writing the *Idyll* it is more than probable that at the moment when the work was actually begun, when I was summoned into the higher consciousness, each one of these ghosts was inhabited by its true ego, or spiritual form.

These priests were not the priests who appear as characters in the book; it is necessary to state this clearly to avoid any confusion. The priests who gave the story of Sense to the world were representatives of the great spiritual religion, (that "white magic" which came from prehistoric times,) acting once more in a definite manner upon man and aiding his evolution.

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The priests in the story represent those who were sorcerers, workers of "black magic."

It must be remembered that magic is a word of dignity and spirituality, derived as it is, from the ancient Zend. It simply means the powers and practises of the wise men, the Magi. Professor Walter Budge says: * "The belief in magic, the word being used in its best sense, is older in Egypt than the belief in God."—"Egyptian magic dates from the time when the pre-dynastic and pre-historic dwellers in Egypt believed that air, and the sky were peopled with countless beings, visible and invisible, which were held to be friendly or unfriendly to the earth, and the underworld, and the man—" He points out that the magic known in other countries has been drawn

*Walter Budge's "Egyptian Magic," Kegan Paul.

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from "the White Magic" and "the
Black Magic" of ancient Egypt, and
adds: "it is impossible to say exactly
how much the beliefs and religious sys-
tems of other nations were influenced by
them, but there is no doubt that certain
views and religious ideas of many
heathen and Christian sects may be
traced directly to them."

This is the glorious side of the retro-
spect, showing how the highest that is
in us, and the best that we know, has its
origin and root in the mysterious pre-
historic past of Egypt.

A great, dark, gloomy shape arises
from the same ancient source and the
light and the darkness battled ceaselessly
then as they have done ever since, in the
world and in every man's own nature.

Professor Wallis Budge says: "To
him that was versed in the lore contained

in the books of 'the double house of life' the future was as well known as the past and neither time nor distance could limit the operations of his power; the mysteries of life and death were laid bare before him—Now if such views as these concerning the magician's power were held by the educated folk of ancient Egypt there is little to wonder at when we find that beliefs and superstitions of the most degraded character flourished with rank luxuriance among the peasants and working classes of that country—To meet the religious needs of such pople the magician, and in later times the priest, found it necessary to provide pageants and ceremonies which appealed chiefly to the senses—this magic degenerated into sorcery, and demonology, and witchcraft, and those who dealt in it were regarded as associ-

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ates of the Devil and servants of the
powers of darkness, and workers of the
'black art.'” Here we have the atmos-
phere in which the story of Sensa is set,
we feel how true to life is the picture of
the innocent neophyte plunged into the
battle between the powers of good and
evil. Subba Rao, the learned Brahmin
Theosophist says of the Idyll:* “It
truly depicts the Egyptian faith and the
Egyptian priesthood, when the religion
had already begun to lose its purity and
degenerate into a system of Tantric wor-
ship contaminated and defiled by black
magic, unscrupulously used for selfish
and immoral purposes.”

If we first of all read the Idyll in its
artistic setting as a story of ancient
Egypt, laid in one of its great Temples,
(now long since a ruin, buried beneath

* “Esoteric Writings” page 240, (Bombay).

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the dust of ages,) we see the young boy, born of the peasants, a fellah, chosen out of his family to enter its sacred hidden priestly life as a novice. He is innocent, untrained, simple. He is awe-struck at the vocation open to him, and at the majesty and dignity of the priests. To them he is simply an ignorant boy from the country who will have enough work given him to do, such as he is fitted for. They think nothing of him, and Agmabd, the high priest of the "dark goddess," the leader of the group of black magicians, does not notice how profound is the impression made on the sensitive child by his presence and personality. His golden beard, his exquisite robe, white, embroidered with gold in mystic patterns, the glamour which encompassed him, filled Sensa with strange new emotions, inexplicable

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and bewildering. In spite of his charm
and gentleness the child recognized in
him something hard and cold, something
scarcely human. He indicates this by
saying that Agmabd seemed to him like
something carved. Agmabd sees a timid
boy, and bids him not to fear. He di-
rects that he shall be taken into the
school. Here where pale students study
difficult papyri, the priest who is their
teacher treats him with contempt. The
new novice is only a country boy, clearly
no scholar; there is no time to be wasted
on him. He directs that the child be
taken to the gardener, who will be able
to give him some work. He goes into
this place of beauty, and being a seer
and clairvoyant becomes aware of the
presence of The Goddess—the spirit of
true religion becomes visible to him, per-
sonified, rising out of the sacred flower

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of Egypt. In full waking clairvoyance he gazes upon her, and then tries to approach her, but this effort is too great, and he faints away.

The fact that he is a seer at once changes his position in the Temple. The black magicians determine to control him and use his gifts for their own ends. They are in great need of one with this gift, to act as a medium for their dark goddess, to enable her to communicate with them and with the people. Every effort is made to secure him for this purpose. The battle between the two forces of good and evil literally rage over him. He is of priceless value to Agmabd and the black magicians who follow and obey him. They have need of a medium, there is no seer or clairvoyant amongst them, and although they have all the learning of the ancient Egyp-

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tian, all the powers of the students of
magic, they cannot communicate with
their innermost guide and controller,
the dark Queen, without the psychic gift.
It has been lost by reason of their utter
selfishness and degradation, so that they
have had nothing to offer the people but
inventions and deceit. They are placed
before us in the position of the fortune-
tellers and miracle-workers of to-day—
when the power has left them, in order
to keep the suffrages and the support of
the public on whom they depend it be-
comes necessary to invent and to lie.
The company of the high priests are
weary of subterfuge and exhausted in
invention. The discovery of a natural
clairvoyant, a born seer, in one of the
young neophytes, is to them like the
sight of gold in the soil to a gold-digger.
The child must be secured, made their

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slave, trained in mediumship, taught how to listen to the strange voice of the dark Queen, (the personification of evil and falsehood and selfishness,) and to give her messages to her servants; taught how to take their requests to her and obtain from her the gratification of their desires. This is the vocation laid down for Sensa, upon which he is to enter immediately, without any delay whatever. They cannot afford to wait—they have sold their very souls to the Devil, and they must have payment—power and the gratification of desire for themselves, miracles and excitement for the people who support them. None of these things can they get, because there is none among them with psychic power, none who is not bound by materialism in consequence of evil doing and selfishness. Therefore so soon as the gardener

THE STORY OF SENSA, AN INTERPRETATION tells them that the child has seen a vision, they claim him for their own. But the vision was that of Truth, of the personification of the Logos; the Lily-Queen of Egypt's pure religion had discovered his open sight before the black magicians knew of it; and his heart had gone out to truth and purity and love; he had done obeisance to the Supreme. Therefore the black magicians found the task of subduing him to their evil purposes, and selfish will, much harder than they had expected it to be. They thought he was merely an ignorant boy who would be as wax in their hands; whom they could use and exploit without difficulty; but he was indeed a human being within whom was illumination and who was struggling to retain it and to draw nearer and nearer to the light. The ordeals to which he was subjected,

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the temptations placed in his way, the seductions offered to him, give the setting of sombre and brilliant pictures required for the enactment of this tragedy of the soul.

That the black magicians should have so misjudged the neophyte is perfectly natural and true to life. An inability to recognise the higher natures is a characteristic of those who have chosen the path of self-aggrandisement. The priests who surrounded Sensa were so deeply plunged in the gratification of desire and in the blind materialism which results from it, that they no longer understood the laws of evolution and did not realise that waking clairvoyance and the true Vision are only possible to one who has entered upon the upward path. Therefore they miscalculated his strength, and met with a

resistance they did not look for. They thought that by the mere exercise of authority over this helpless child they could get all that they wanted. And at first it seemed as if it was to be so. He was taken into the holy of holies in which dwelled the dark Power. Again he *sees*—this time to tremble with horror. And he refuses to obey the command of the dark Power; fainting, once more, from exhaustion. And so passed his first day within the Temple. The priests seek for means to entice the soul from the body, and leave it uncontrolled, to be used by the dark Queen as her medium; the attempts in which the fascinations and pleasures of black magic on the subtle planes of experience are offered to him seems at first to be successful. The longing for freedom from his imprisonment can be gratified

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by leaving his body ; and when the chance to do this comes he takes it without hesitation, in complete ignorance of the danger. But the Lotus Queen herself comes to his entranced body and wakens it and calls the soul back to take the command. Then Agmabd creates a personification of pleasure, which comes to the boy as another child, a girl full of fun and play. This most difficult feat of the black magician brings success at last ; Sensa follows his new playmate with natural delight. She leads him into gardens of flowers ; among children who are playing games ; and he becomes possessed by the very spirit of pleasure, playing eagerly with the others. This time Agmabd conquered ; while the soul wandered away into the world of child-like delights, the entranced body was seized upon, used, controlled by the dark

Goddess. The *soul of the neophyte* saw itself surrounded by merry children like himself; the *body of the neophyte* was raised up and surrounded by worshipping priests, its voice used to utter words of authority. The gay and innocent soul which had been led from one plane to another by Agmabd's magical powers was happy in the experiences of dream-consciousness, while its body was thus used. Returning to its own place it found all changed. No longer was the ego of this neophyte the ruler of its body. The boy had become a medium, made so by witchcraft and sorcery despite the power of the Lotus Queen. His voice had been used without his knowledge. His body had been worshipped as the dwelling and vehicle of the *Avidya* herself while he had been playing with his child friends in the dream conscious-

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ness. It is a most interesting study in the simultaneous enactment of events, and in the passing of the soul from one state of consciousness to another, which is here given. Ambition and emulation have come to him in the subtle consciousness, artfully drawn forth in him by the black magician who is guiding his fate; he is the successful competitor in the games, and then he is lifted up to be a leader of the children and placed on a throne in their midst to speak to them. He is quite forgetful of his body and of his responsibility with regard to it, excited by the subtle pleasures offered to him. Then he "fell asleep" as it is expressed. Any one who has had a very vivid dream consciousness and returned suddenly from it to the physical consciousness will recognise this description as perfectly correct. The feeling is ex-

actly the same as that of falling asleep in the physical consciousness. Followed by the voices of the children acclaiming him and praising him, he entered into his body and found it surrounded by worshipping priests to whom he had spoken words he knew not, and could not have understood if he had known them. The only child among the crowd was the little girl who had led him into the gardens of subtile pleasure and returned with him; the creature of Agmabd, a form animated by his mind. The manner in which this child appears, and her actions, is one of the signs of that high priest being a very highly advanced *Yogin*, a *sorcerer* of the first rank. And even now, so late in his career, he might have cast the darkness from him and become by suffering and expiation, a *Yogin* of the first rank. But he is unable to pass

beyond the contemplation of the phenomenal universe. He cannot escape from the thrall of the dominating characteristic of his nature, the love of power. He is destroyed by his own ambition. He has conquered the child-seer who goes helplessly with him into the desecrated and terrible Holy of Holies, there to be the medium between him and his evil ruler. He has sought long for this opportunity of direct communication with the powerful spirit, determined to secure the prizes for which he has worked, the gratification of his colossal ambition. He desires to be a ruler in the world of men, to wear a crown of absolute power. Now he is able, by reason of his conquest of Sensa's will, to make his final demand of the evil one. And he is immediately confronted by the supreme ordeal of the black magician. Till now he

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has retained his claim to immortality and to the possibility of ultimate redemption. But if he is to have his desired prize, he must surrender the heritage of man, he must sell his birthright. And after a brief pause, in which his great intellect and his widely developed consciousness, survey the bargain, he pronounces "the fatal words." Henceforth he is one of the *Prakritilaya*, those Yogins who are soulless and without knowledge of the Supreme, and who must ultimately be disintegrated, or "resolved into nature" because there is no spiritual being within which can live on. And the boy, looking on him as he makes the dreadful choice, sees that his face grows "colder and more stony than any carven form." Already he experiences an augmentation of the peculiar strength of the magician. He exhibits the complete perfection of

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body which is one of the powers of the magician, the perfection which according to Patanjali, the Persian sage, includes "beauty, gracefulness, strength, and adamantine hardness." The aspect as of a carved figure had belonged to him in the eyes of the child-seer from the first; now it has become confirmed. Agmabd has bartered immortality for a mortality during which he can be injured by none, he can suffer no ill, he will be immune from all danger. Such are the great and terrible beings who appear as rulers of masses of men from time to time, who conquer and control by sheer force of will, who bear charmed lives, against whom revenge and justice are alike unavailing.

In order to give to Agmabd the crown which he demands of her the evil spirit requires twelve "sworn servants" to do

her bidding. For there is work to do, and the workers must be secured. The dark Queen tells Agmabd that the number must be complete. There are ten priests in the Temple who are hungry with desire for pleasure; the dark Queen promises to satisfy them and in so doing to bind them to their service. There is Kamen Baka, the second in dignity in the Temple; his heart's desire is known to the dark Queen and she is prepared to gratify it, without delay. "And who shall be the one to complete the number?" asks Agmabd.

"This child," she answers, and by those words the fate of Sena is sealed; that fate which changes him from "a gay child, a happy creature of sunshine" into a "sad youth" whose "sick heart held hidden within it many secrets" of shame

and sin and sorrow, and who knew himself for a slave.

This terrible scene is immediately followed by the summons from the dark Queen to Kamen Baka. He enters the holy of holies, a blind man, stumbling in the dark, seeing nothing, altogether dependent on the mediumship of another, despised by the evil power whom he serves. The dark Queen views him with contempt because his human personality is his limitation. He craves personal adoration, personal love given to him by those around him, whom he feels regard him now with coldness and dislike. His demand is easily granted, if he pronounces the fatal words which belong to this step in the downward path. He knows well what they are, and with the dreadful glare upon his face of the one who desires to have and to take all

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and give nothing, utters them, though with pain. "From henceforward, though all men love me, I love no man."

The dark Queen knows that the strength of the young seer has been tried to the uttermost, and orders that he shall be given rest. Agmabd therefore leaves him to himself and tells the gardener to take him out among the flowers. Sebona is not to take him to the lotus tank but among beautiful things which refresh his soul and awaken his artistic nature. But all true art is fed from the Supreme, and in the midst of his delight in beauty, of his rejoicing in the glory of life, the Lady of the Lotus suddenly comes to him and tells him the mystery of the water, and shows him how to rise upon it. But he is not strong enough to remain with her; he falls away, sinking back into the darkness of his slavery and the words

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she speaks to him become but a memory. But still he cherishes them in his heart and they ring out dimly from time to time in the obscure regions of his darkened brain, as the years of slavery and shame pass by and he grows, in his bondage, from childhood to manhood. So ends the first Book of the Idyll. The battle for this poor human soul still rages, the Supreme holds fast to the spark of divinity which it has lit, though apparently Sensa is lost and is fated to be one of the black magicians.

CHAPTER II.

THE first book of the Idyll can be read as the story of any neophyte of the priesthood in the days of the degeneracy and degradation of the great religion of Egypt, if he was found to be a natural psychic. But the second book contains scenes and events which show that Sena regarded as an individual, was not only a seer but a soul so highly advanced as to be ready to become an adept. He is moreover described as a heirophant, one who teaches. So that in reading the detailed description of the ordeals and tests through which he passes, it is inevitable that the student of occultism shall look upon him as a recognised personality, one of the great ones of the race. Subba

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Rao, who observes * that the Idyll is probably a true story, goes on to say, "Sensa is represented to be the last great heirophant of Egypt. Just as a tree leaves its seed to develope into a similar tree, even if it should perish completely, so does every great religion seem to leave its life and energy in one or more great adepts destined to preserve its wisdom and revive its growth at some future time when the cycle of evolution tends in the course of its revolution, to bring about the desired result. The grand old religion of Chemi is destined to reappear on this planet in a higher and nobler form when the appointed time arrives, and there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that the Sensa of our story is probably now a very high adept, who is waiting to carry out the

* Esoteric Writings, page 240.

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commands of the "Lady of the White Lotus." This view, of course, is based upon the character of the ordeals described, and upon Sensа's action in teaching the people. The grounds for it are inherent in the story. But it is not possible to identify Sensа with any known adept, nor has any such attempt been made except as a vague speculation. Still, the idea suggested by Subba Rao that the ego of Sensа may yet have service to do for humanity gives a keen interest to the character and adds to the profound occultism of the story the romance of a personal touch. The Sensа of whose trials and fierce struggles we read may be amongst us now—visible or invisible—embodied or unembodied.

In the beginning of the second book we are shown the boy grown to manhood, though still a young man. He is valued

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and cared for in the Temple as such a priceless servant would be ; he is amused and waited upon by other young priests in the intervals of the exhausting forms of mediumship to which he is compelled to give himself. The waking clairvoyance in which, in his more innocent days, he became conscious of the Lady of the Lotus and received her direct inspiration, has apparently become no longer possible for him. He is utterly given over to the madness of irresponsible mediumship, and knows nothing of the dread teachings and instructions uttered in his voice to the priestly sorcerers. He needs not only rest but refreshment to preserve his vitality. The dark goddess had said to him in his childhood that he must have beauty. She told him that he would have been a great artist if he had lived for beauty ; but that might not

be. He had other work to do. In his childhood and youth he was surrounded with quantities of flowers and all beautiful things; as he grew to manhood he needed more than this, and was allowed to go out of the Temple into the city and find pleasures that would restore his strength. Throughout the story he is shown as being only attracted by beauty, or by pleasures of a beautiful kind. He had felt no interest in any of the mental work or mental studies done in the Temple; this would naturally be the case with a child-seer, and regarding the story as that of one who was passing through the initiations of adeptship, it is evident that he would have evolved beyond the mental plane. But beauty and beautiful pleasures attracted him so deeply that this was indeed his undoing. By recognising and taking advantage of

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this part of his nature Agmabd had obtained control over him at the beginning. And now the slave of the high priest was sent out to experience all the seductions and passions of human life in the city; knowing full well that his chains were upon him and that when his strength was restored he would be recalled. It is at this point in the story that a new character appears, Malen, a young priest who is his companion, whose connection with him is full of mystery and meaning. It is Malen who suggests to him to go forth in search of pleasure, as otherwise he will die of exhaustion; and who assures him that Agmabd has already given permission. Malen leads him forth and leaves him in the city with a beautiful woman who is evidently a re-appearance of the personification of pleasure known to him in childhood as his little girl play-

mate. The description of his meeting with her again is most wonderfully vivid. He is amazed to think that he has so long neglected her. So Malen leaves him in the company of a creature formed by Agmabd from one of the serpents which are the dark Queen's living robe. When the child-seer's innocent eyes had seen this garment of Desire upon the evil spirit it had filled him with horror. But this horror had left him, he had become familiar with the aspect of the monstrous forms; and now when by sorcery the evil thing was made lovely he dwelled with it in delight. Uncounted Time passed by; he reckoned it not. But Agmabd watched and waited, counting all and knowing all. And when the great day of the river festival arrived he went into the city of pleasure to fetch the seer of the Temple, saying simply: "Come!"

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And the seer, knowing himself a slave, obeyed. The beautiful woman who was his companion, vanished; the sorcerer had removed the spell, and when Sensa looked for her he saw but a serpent which reared its head. Agmabd smiles at his fear and assures him that this favorite of the evil one will not harm the chosen servant. But Sensa cannot look on the horrible shape undisguised, and he hears its hiss of anger as he goes with averted eyes. His was the true seer's love for true beauty which is beautiful to the core. Still pleasure and rest had restored his strength, and as the "chosen servant" of the dark Queen he follows Agmabd, a deep gloom falling on him as he enters the Temple. The hour of the great ordeal is at hand, and he knows it, blinded and besotted though he is.

. It will be well, before entering upon

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the consideration of the great ordeal, to go over the story from the commencement once more in the light of its real, vital interpretation, that of the Tragedy of the Soul. In the other two interpretations there are necessarily limitations; we are taken into the atmosphere of ancient Egypt, or into the personal life of a great adept and must remain there till the end of the mysterious narrative. How mysterious is this narrative begins to be apparent to the student only as he understands that the soul-tragedy which is so perfectly fitted into the splendid setting is literally the story of Every-Soul, of all souls that incarnate on this earth, and that it is a drama which is continually enacted from all time and to all time, in all races and countries and in all conditions. As it took place in the past, so it is taking place now, and here.

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To the Soul, liberation is a birthright; as it descended into matter so it must eventually emerge therefrom, freed and purified. We ourselves, and those others of the race whom we know and can observe, are at one point or at another of this universal path. In the great Sanskrit teachings the same story is told in the Bhagavad Gita, where Arjund, the Soul of man, is shown fighting upon the battlefield of his human nature. The whole of the Gita bears this interpretation, while it can also be read as the story of a war. So the whole of the Idyll bears this interpretation, while it can also be read as the story of a seer. In both cases the story is most perfect and complete when regarded in the greater meaning, although in each case the setting in which it is so fitted as to be hidden to the ordinary reader, is true

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to the life of the ancient peoples from
whom the Song and the Idyll have been
drawn. The short preface, written in the
same manner as the prologue, and the
narrative, states clearly and concisely
the real meaning of the whole.

“The ensuing pages contain a story
which has been told in all ages and among
every people. It is the Tragedy of the
Soul. Attracted by Desire, the ruling
element in the lower nature of man, it
stoops to sin; brought to itself by suf-
fering, it turns for help to the redeem-
ing spirit within; and in the final sacri-
fice achieves its apotheosis and sheds a
blessing on mankind.”

The key to the meaning of the Idyll
in this aspect lies in the point that Sense,
when he enters the Temple gate, enters
his physical body. From that moment
everything which is related takes place

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within himself; every person who plays a part in the drama is a personification of a quality or characteristic of his own nature. When he goes into the city for pleasure, when he appears among the people on the sacred boat, when he speaks to the people at the gate, the events are still being enacted within himself, for in each case it is a part of himself which he meets and encounters. The beautiful woman in the city is a form of his own desire; the dark goddess on the sacred boat is his own evil nature; the Lily Queen is his own divine nature.

The All-mother—Isis of Egypt—who guides the souls of men to their places of birth upon earth brings him to the gate of the Temple. From the quiet fields of the unborn she leads him into the world of men, where he is at once roused and captivated by the sights and sounds of

this special form of life—human life. She, the veiled and mystic Mother, comes from Eternity into Time, when she guides souls hither; and she pauses a brief moment ere her return, to gaze upon the confusion and listen to the babble, which are a part of human evolution.

She has nothing to do with physical birth, or with the raising of the Temple—when it is ready to receive the soul and come into communication with its ego, she plays her incessant and unwearying part of bringing the soul to the gate and stays until it is admitted and the gate closed upon it. We therefore see Sena first not as a baby, but as a young boy, at the time when the awakening of human intelligence usually takes place, and that which draws him to enter the gate, that which attracts and awakens him is

Ambition, personified as the high priest Agmabd.

The personification of various parts of man's nature as Agmabd and the other priests of the Temple, and as the other persons who take part in the story, is natural for an Egyptian author and characteristic of the modes of thought of his race. Professor Wiedemann of Bonn says, "the body of man throughout life was regarded [by the ancient Egyptian] as a battlefield where good and evil spirits fought for the mastery."

The soul, entering into its human consciousness, is first seized upon by ambition, and under its direction surveys the possibilities of its kingdom.

It is indicated at once, by the actual movement of the story, that the mental life of man plays no important part in the evolution of the soul. Sensa, enter-

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ing the "large and beautiful room" of intellectual pursuits, finds that the teacher is dim of sight, and the neophytes who study with him pay no heed to life itself and do not look upon it. He is himself the teacher and the taught; and that part of him which has worked upon the mental plane for ages has but grown blind, and the other part which studies new mental statements sees no fresh realities, but gazes only on a written page. To him, full of the craving to understand life itself, this large and beautiful room appears bare and unfurnished and he passes on through it, by command of his own wise intellect, personified in the dim-sighted old teacher, to things living and things real—the garden of life! He can only enter this part of his own nature by permission of the gardener, who has to appear before the gate can be un-

locked which admits him to this "world of delicate and refreshing glory." The instinct which has led him to this gate, personified as a novice who has acted as his guide from the time of his entrance into the temple, is now strong in action, and clamours that he shall be admitted. Three times does he ring the bell before the gardener answers the summons. And when at last he slowly comes, moving among the flowers in his black robe, and agrees to receive the "new pupil" it is instinct which unlocks the gate, ushers the Soul through it and returning into the inner dimness, is seen no more.

"Come with me," says the gardener, "and fear not."

Who is this "strange man whose face would awaken interest in any human breast?"

CHAPTER III.

THE story of Sense, is, as we are told by its author, in the preface, the tragedy of the soul of man. It takes no heed of the bodily life, or the mental life of man. Its activity and movement begin with the meeting with the gardener when the soul awakens and by its own instinct and effort reaches out beyond the walls of the temple to the mystery of that garden which belongs to it. This is not the field of open nature, but the temple garden, man's heritage, as much as the temple itself. But, though it belongs to the soul, the gardener must show the way among its beauties; Sense would be helpless without him. Too often does

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the soul remain imprisoned in its temple, ignorant that there is a temple garden, for lack of demanding help from the gardener.

This is how Subba Rao speaks of the gardener, in *Esoteric Writings*.

“Sebona, the gardener is *intuition*. ‘They cannot make a phantom of me,’ declares Sebona; and in saying so this unsophisticated but honest rustic truly reveals his own mystery.”

While Sensa is in the garden the very existence of ambition is forgotten by him. Agmabd controls him when he is within the temple walls, but not when he enters into that higher consciousness which is represented by the garden. His intuition is then his guide, and leads him to the sacred lotus tank without delay and we are at once at the heart of the mystery, in the thick of the story;

the battle has begun. His own spiritual intelligence is within this garden, and by its aid he can perceive the light of the Logos,—wisdom. We are shown, practically, what is waking clairvoyance, as, later on we are shown, practically, what is mediumship. By the help of intuition Sena raises himself into consciousness in his spiritual body [the sixth principle of man according to the sevenfold constitution of the microcosm derived from Brahminical philosophy]. This spiritual being in its awakened and enlightened state is able to perceive wisdom, and therefore Sena, the human monad, is able to hold direct communication with the Logos. Intuition has led him to the home of the Lady of the Lotus, passing by all the other flowers, drawn by the sound of the “ delicate-voiced ” waters. There he

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sees the Goddess of Truth, and endeavours to approach her; but he is not strong enough to succeed in this first attempt, and sinks down through the planes of consciousness till with the gardener's help he re-enters the walls of the temple. He does so by a different gate from that by which he had come forth—the way is now not that of instinct, but of knowledge.

And now it is necessary to consider the exquisite and wonderful mystery of the Lotus Tank.

In the astral body, or etheric double of man, there exist centres of life, or consciousness, which correspond to the nervous ganglia of the physical body. In the ethereal body, as we are taught by ancient Hindu mystical writers as well as by seers of the present day, exist centres which are known by the Sanscrit

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word for them “*Chakras*” as it is difficult to convey the meaning in a single word of any modern language. A Chakra is a wheel of living fire, and as the ego develops its higher form it learns to use these psychic powers of its etheric double and then the corresponding powers of its ethereal body. As St. Paul put it, having been sown a psyche it is raised a quickening spirit. The Chakra of the brain is the seventh and highest, and according to the Yogins must become living and conscious before enlightenment can be attained. Its Sanscrit name is “Sahasrara Chakram,” which means the centre of the thousand-petalled lotus—what Sebona calls “the home of our Lady of the Lotus.” Subba Rao in his exposition of the *Idyll of the White Lotus* draws special attention to what he declares is the real meaning of

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the Lotus Tank in the garden. He says "Sahasrava Chakram in the brain is often spoken of as a Lotus tank in the Hindu mystical writings. The 'sweet-sounding water' of this tank is described as Amritam or Nectar Padma, the White Lotus, is said to have a thousand petals, as has the mysterious Sahasravam of the Yogis. It is an unopened bud in the ordinary mortal, and just as a lotus opens its petals and expands in all its beauty when the sun rises above the horizon and sheds his rays on the flower, so does the Sahasravam of the neophyte open and expand when the Logos begins to pour its light into its centre. When fully expanded it becomes the glorious seat of the Lady of the Lotus, the sixth principle of man; and sitting on this flower the great goddess pours out the waters of life and grace for the gratifica-

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tion and regeneration of the human
soul." *

He goes on to say that the followers of Hatha Yoga, (which is the endeavour to develop the soul by psychophysical training, such as "posture" and the regulation of the breath,) believe that in the ecstatic trance known as Samadhi the soul can reach this thousand petalled flower and "obtain a glimpse of the Splendour of the Spiritual Sun." But this is a most profound and difficult effort, and is not the result of concentration, or of trance alone, but is attained through sushumna (the *dath* of the Kabbalists). This requires much physical and psychic knowledge and effort. The path of the Hatha Yoga exits for those who are so steeped in materialism that it is necessary for them to begin by the

* Page 244, "Esoteric Writings."

control of the body before attempting to control the thinking principle. There are many followers of Hatha Yoga in the present day, but unfortunately there is an indisposition to study profoundly so as to obtain the whole teaching at the fountain-head. The bits and scraps of it which are practised, such as "breathing" and "posture", partially understood and separated from the whole, are a great danger to those who attempt them. "Concentration" without due understanding and due preparation is the greatest danger of all. The follower of Hatha Yoga who is determined to attain success by that method will give twenty years to the conquest of his body, before attempting anything further. This path is the slowest route of all to the goal. Patanjali Yoga commences with the control of the mind and

thinking principle, taking for granted that the body is in subjection. But it is fully admitted by ancient writers that instantaneous illumination is possible by means of intuition. And in Sensa we have the soul which, if it has sought to reach wisdom by the weary way of Hatha Yoga, or the lofty method of Patanjali Yoga, has left all this in the past. He is capable of absolute faith, he is a seeker after absolute truth, and therefore by the guidance of his own intuition he is able to raise himself in a flash of enlightenment, to the sacred water tank, which is the awakened organ of perception of his spiritual form; and for a moment of supreme joy, to gaze upon wisdom.

And now we come to the point where the intense and vital teaching of *Light on the Path* is needed. The uttermost

tragedy of the soul, its deep degradation, may be spared the neophyte who has learned to "kill out ambition." But Sensa has not learned this lesson. Ambition is the incentive to effort for the ordinary man; it is that which brings him even upon the path. For to become an occultist is the highest ambition of man. And Sensa, who is upon the path, who is capable of instantaneous illumination, has not learned that he must dominate the qualities of human nature before he can safely enter upon the exercise of his super-nature. Therefore instead of controlling ambition he is controlled by it. Dark-visaged, unnamed instincts press upon him; they are the creatures and tools of ambition. And intuition is of no use to Sensa now. Sebona cries out, "you have seen—you are a teacher of men"—and hands him

over to the instincts of the lower nature which place him immediately in the thrall of ambition.

This is a profound lesson for the neophyte, hard to learn. He does not know that until he has learned, he cannot teach. A glimpse of wisdom is enough to make him think he is a teacher of men; and his intuition leaves him helpless. From want of knowledge he fails under this first great temptation and becomes the tool of his own ambition. There are those in all ages who go thus far, and no further, who are so completely dominated by the ambition which seizes upon them that never again do they see the Lady of the Lotus. And now begins the battle—is this to be Sensa's fate? or not.

Ambition alone was not tempting enough to seize and possess the soul which had so lately looked upon the Su-

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preme; and therefore, the high priest does not address Sensa when he comes into his presence from the garden, nor does he act alone. So soon as he has looked upon the strange face of the illumined soul he goes for his great ally, his brother, as he calls him, Kameñ Baka. This high priest is clearly shown by the movement of the story to be the personification of human desire.

All the lower qualities of the man's nature now rise into activity, anxious, and determined, to obtain the mastery over the higher nature and use its supreme gift of perception for their own gratification. In some natures the cold and heartless claim of ambition for power and supremacy would have sufficed to effect this; but this soul whose history we are following is highly evolved, it is full of love of beauty and of beautiful

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pleasure, and therefore the priest who personifies desire is called to consult with Agmabd. Throughout the whole struggle Agmabd holds the position of ruler among the priests; and Kamen Baka, though called by him "my brother" is dominated by him. This highly evolved soul is ambitious in desire; it seeks no common or crude gratification. The lower instincts, personified as younger priests, wait upon Sena, refresh him, and make him ready, so far as is in their power, for the supreme effort decided upon. For Kamen Baka has advised that the seer should be at once taken straight into the presence of Desire itself.* From her he draws his own inspiration direct, and he regards her as that which is life. Agmabd per-

* *Avidyā*, "the dark side of human nature" *Subba Rao*
"The first illusion and the last" *Ancient Wisdom*.

mits himself to be led by this advice, and lets the soul rest. From this rest it awakens to find itself in darkness, the awful darkness of the Temple, and surrounded by a dense crowd of beings animated by desire alone, and eager to use his priceless gift for their own ends. The whole of his mysterious and infinitely complex nature is demanding life and gratification, and this fierce crowd, silent in its passion takes the child in its grip, and compels him to approach the door of the innermost sanctuary of his being, the dark and awful holy of holies. The circle of priests which had surrounded his couch when he awoke, closes round him as he moves at the command of Agmabd and he passes on his way, powerless. For not only do these nearest close about him, but they are closed upon by

others, and in every direction, so far as he can see, the crowd closes in. Is not this the true picture of the awakening of manhood and womanhood? The whole being arises in a storm of agitation, to demand of brief human life all that it has to give; the little spark of divinity in its midst is led hither and thither by it. And the horizon is scarcely to be seen, or the world outside remembered, for the turbulence and growing strength of all these strange qualities which go to the making of a human being. Sena, passing to the inner sanctuary, catches a faint glimpse of the outer world he has left and it is to him like the face of an old friend. Prisoned in the microcosm he looks for a fleeting instant upon the macrocosm before he enters the deepest darkness of the tomb into which he has descended.

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He is not conquered yet; he is still the unsullied soul, and the first sight of the lambent fire of Desire makes him alarmed and miserable; and when he sees its actual form he is filled with horror. Desire commands him to enter the sanctuary alone, and he neither can nor will do so. Then in anger she reveals her face to him and he shrinks with loathing and fear, falling once more into unconsciousness. Again the strain had been too great for him; the first time it was the attempt to reach the light of the Logos which was beyond his strength; now the revulsion from that which lurks in the darkness of his own lower nature utterly exhausts him. This is a crisis in life which every one experiences in himself more or less definitely, and which those who have the opportunity of watching the change from youth to maturity take

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place in others, are familiar with. To the one who is passing through it, nothing else in the universe is of any importance for the time being; the amazement of discovering within one's nature the great cosmic forces which form the two arms of the crucifix, at work and at war is so bewildering. That good and evil should be encountering each other on the general battlefield of human life, in the affairs of men and of nations; is comparatively easy to understand; but that this same warfare should be found within one's own small heart is at first a great surprise and a great shock. But it is so; the fact is there, the microcosm reproduces the macrosom in every detail, and the great dark Queen of Desire who is almost visible in the midst of the carnage of a revolution is quite visible to the spiritual seer in the dark place of

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his own inner nature. The vision leaves him almost lifeless, helpless and amazed. When he recovers from the swoon and cries aloud in terror at the recollection of what he has seen, a priest who is in attendance upon him, a representative of his lower mentality, offers him fresh water and brings light into his room. And then he proceeds to urge upon him that he need not fear, that it is only his youth which makes him afraid, that he has received great honour, that the gaze of "our all powerful lady" is enough to make a man swoon. This priest is evidently an emissary of Agmabd's for he speaks as one who has been told what to say, and recites his lesson well. He bids the youth not to rebel against the vision, but to appreciate the honour which has fallen on him; and above all not to be afraid. The arguments brought forward

by this priest are those which every soul, horror struck at the first sight of evil within itself hears from its urgent desire—nature, and the instincts attendant upon that nature. “ Surely the world and all that is in it exists for the pleasure of the soul; is it not mere cowardice to shrink from that which arises naturally and which draws and leads all men?” Unable to answer such questions the weary and terrified soul looks for the help of intuition and asks for Sebona. The thought of going into the wonderful and beautiful garden of his soul rejoices Sensa, and he waits patiently for Sebona to be aroused and brought to him. Intuition does not work in the dark; it needs the light of the sun, it lives and moves in life and light and beauty. Its quickest and keenest moment is at the wonderful hour of

dawn; and the weary spirit must wait for the first faint ray of light before intuition is strong enough to come to his aid. Then the priest, whose words had chilled and disheartened Sensa, summons the gardener, and Sebona,—“human! loving,”—if uncouth and dark, comes to the sad and shadowy room where the spirit is brooding. This description of a weary and hopeless night vigil, followed by a return of courage and hope when the dawn comes, will be recognised by most people; it is a part of the common lot and general experience of man. Sebona kneels humbly beside the gifted child, who demands of him an explanation of the reason for his being horrified by the sight of the ghastly face of Desire. Sebona does not attempt to answer this question but leads him forth at once among the flowers, and when the

joy of life has seized again upon the child, points out to him that in spite of the darkness and its horrors, the sun rises again and again in all his magnificence. Then he leads Sensa, unawares, to the lotus tank and asks him if he sees the goddess. Sensa is still full of fear, and dreads to see the dark and cruel face of Desire. But when he looks up the fair woman of the Lotus * is once again before him and he knows that intuitively he has once more reached her home. Sebona urges him to speak to her, and falls again upon his knees to watch the great event which might possibly now take place, of the opening of communication between man's higher nature and the Divine itself. Sensa attempts to approach her, again, and with Sebona's help, reaches the water tank in his higher con-

* *Vidyâ*, wisdom.

sciousness and touches the very garment of the goddess where it falls upon the surface of the water. He tries to look into her face, but light radiates from it and he cannot see it because of its glory. He is blinded by the splendour of the Logos. The Lily Queen addresses him, and this gives him courage to ask the question which fills his soul and haunts him.

“Mother, what of the darkness?”

Poor quivering human soul, asking of its own highest the question of the ages—how to deal with its own lowest. And now the Logos itself gives in plain words the grand teaching of the ages, taught always by every true philosopher and mystic.

“The darkness is not to be feared; it is to be conquered and driven back as the soul grows stronger in the light.”

If the darkness of man's own inner nature is not to be feared, then is there nothing in the cosmos which can strike him with dismay or fill him with alarm. For the darkness of "the innermost sanctuary of the Temple" is of the same substance as that of Hell itself. The Lily Queen explains to the seer, in simple language, that this innermost sanctuary of the Temple is secluded from the light of day in order that it may be illumined by the light of the spirit. It is not so illumined because the "blind priests" the qualities of man's nature which are drawn from darkness (*Tamas*) comfort themselves with its brood, and resist illumination.

These same priests, with their attendant brood of the evil thoughts of darkness, were already at work upon their task of shutting out the light of the spirit.

Sensa was drawn back, in suffering, from the high place he had reached; Sebona stood rebuked and downcast. Ambition and Desire, in the persons of the two high priests, placed themselves one on each side of the soul, and made it understand that its place was between them. Thus Sensa re-entered the "gloomy gates" of the Temple, leaving the place of spiritual light and life, guarded and guided by these two ruling and dominant passions of human nature. He approaches his doom; he enters upon his term of slavery. There will be resistance—there will be veiled and fearful rebellion—there will be flashes of illumination—but from now until the final great ordeal Sensa is guarded as a prisoner by the strong qualities of his own lower nature, and bidden to serve them as a slave serves.

CHAPTER IV.

AMBITION now assumes absolute control over the developing nature, and compels intuition to remain silent, not allowing it to approach the soul. Sena is imprisoned in the sanctuary of the Temple, guarded and watched by the crowd of lower instincts which figure as novices and priests in the drama. He is prevented from going forth into the garden, or from meeting the gardener. The composite nature, approaching maturity, demands success in its undertakings, and is coerced by its overwhelming crowd of lower instincts into measuring success by the standard of the world. Wisdom and pure spirituality are of no use to one who desires to win prizes. Intuition makes a

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great effort to lead the soul into the higher places which belong to it, and finding it is not able to come to the lotus tank, Sebona plucks a bloom—a flower of wisdom—and sends an emissary of his own to take it to Sensa in his imprisonment. A strange imprisonment it is, for the soul is shut in its temple by those who should be its servants, as a king might be locked in his palace by his people. Sensa receives the flower of wisdom with the utmost delight and cherishes it “as though it were the breathing form of one I loved.” His great anxiety is to hide it from the alien eyes which surround him. Encouraged by the possession of this precious thing Sensa speaks boldly to Agmabd, and tells him he cannot endure the dullness and solitude of his imprisonment in the Temple. When relating this Sensa stays to tell the

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reader that five years later he would not have dared to address Agmabd in such a manner. Five years later he was the slave of ambition, as are so many of the great and successful of the world. They obey its dictates without hesitation. And in a little while Sensà would reach and pass through that condition. But as yet ambition does not mean all to him. He knows there are intensely desirable things in the cosmos which are outside the scope of human ambition. Therefore he speaks boldly to Agmabd, who, knowing the latent power of the human soul makes no angry reply, but places before it a great and terrible temptation, which has to be encountered by all as they pass along the path. It is early for Sensà to meet it; and fearing lest his strength should fail before so great a danger, the Lady of the Lotus herself

comes to his aid. Agmabd places before him a volume bearing the title "*the Arts and Powers of Magic*" and tells him he need never again be lonely if he looks upon its pages. He does so, and immediately temptation, personified, appears before him and offers him freedom from his prison house. He offers to gratify any wish, and "freedom from this room" is Sensa's one desire. "Come" says the man in black, "follow me."

"No!" replies Sensa, "the high priests have imprisoned me—if I am found escaping I shall be punished."

The events now taking place must all be considered with the picture of Sensa (on this plane) as a young man entering upon life, born well in mind. Ambition directs that he shall take a high place in the world. Is he to do so, or is he to

be a seer of spiritual truth disregarded and despised by men? Sena knows well the punishment which would fall on him if he left his appointed place; the self-contempt, the regret. But the tempter does not stay to argue with him; he merely says in a tone of command, "Come! and look not back." This is the moment of greatest danger which has yet come to him. Had he obeyed the tempter implicitly soul-death must have been his lot. But his higher nature compels him to look back and see the consequences of his attempt to secure freedom, and he beholds his beloved Lady of the Lotus, and hears her voice calling upon him to return. "Lady, I obey," he murmurs, and is saved. Subba Rao, in writing of the real nature of soul-death and the ultimate fate of a black magician, says, "A soul—may place itself *en rap-*

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port with a spiritual or elemental existence by evoking it, and concentrating its attention on it for purposes of black magic and Tantric worship. In such a case it transfers its individuality to such existence and is sucked up into it, as it were. In such a case the black magician lives in such a being, and as such a being he continues till the end of Manwantara." * *Sensa* is saved from this awful fate by his own sixth principle which comes into the very sanctuary in which the human soul is imprisoned, and calls upon it to awaken from the "accursed spell." He does so, and finds himself in his prison house, quite alone, deserted by his tempter and also by his higher self; compelled to endure his solitude and realise himself. He finds his flower of wisdom, but it is "languid." He clings to

* *Esoteric Writings*, p. 247.

it however, and places it within his robe. By this faithful clinging to his blossom of truth he is strengthened to pass through the ordeal which follows, when Agmabd leads him blindfold into the inner holy of holies and then bids him look upon the goddess of Desire. But when he dares to gaze into the awful darkness fearing to see the face of horror, it is upon the glorious vision of the Lady of the Lotus that his eyes fall. She soothes and comforts him and bids him believe that he is safe, although he has been placed in "the very dungeon of vice and falsehood," because he himself has entered her atmosphere. And now she utters perhaps the most beautiful of all her speeches: "The royal flower of Egypt dwells upon the sacred waters, which in their purity and peace fitly form its eternal resting place. I am the spirit of the flower, I am sus-

tained upon the waters of truth and my life is formed of the breath of the heavens, which is Love.”

At her bidding the weary soul lies down to rest; and ambition's record of this great effort is contained in the one word "*Vain.*"

CHAPTER V.

THE soul has escaped this great danger, only to be met by more subtle and deeper temptations. This is the ordained line of progress, terrible in its steady advance from one pitfall to another yet deeper.

Sensà awakes from rest, to find a white flower in his hand. Truth has remained with him; only a plucked blossom, but still a flower of wisdom. He regards it with pleasure and is happy in the contemplation of its perfect beauty. Upon this mood of content and confidence enters himself in another form, called into being by this very content and confidence.

A little girl, younger than himself and "bright as the sunshine" comes gayly

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into his seclusion and snatches the flower from him, shaking the water from its leaves.

Man is tempted and betrayed by his own powers, up to the very threshold of immortality.

This little girl is interpreted by Hindu students as *daiva-prakriti*, the higher mind of man rejoicing in its perpetual youth and power, and its capacity to revel in the primordial light. The plucked bloom, separated from the root of truth, led *Sensa* into this greatest danger of all to the highly evolved soul and the highly sensitive mind. *Subba Rao*, in one of his lectures, speaking of the "little girl of the Idyll," pointed out that *daiva-prakriti* is compared to a girl by Hindu writers and the "protean power" being superior to *daiva-prakriti* therefore all the souls

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of human beings are made to be the
wives of Krishna. The little girl is the
human soul upon that plane of glory and
pleasure with which Sense had estab-
lished communication, and was indeed
none other than Sense himself in another
state, using another form and entering
another consciousness. It is well at this
point in the story to recall the fact once
more that it is Egyptian and emanates
from an Egyptian source. Professor
Wiedemann says of the Egyptian writ-
ings—"parts of the soul are treated in
the tents as entirely independent beings."
He enumerates them as the "*Ka*"—
(which is the best known, and is generally
understood as the etheric double)—the
"*Osiris*" *(the immortal double)—the
"*Khou*" (the "perfect shining one")—

* Professor Wiedemann says that "*Osiris*" is some-
times used for the Immortal Double, sometimes for
the *Ka*, (etheric double or astral form).

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the "*Ba*" (which was the human-headed bird, depicted by the ancient Egyptians as revisiting the mummy of the dead) and three other independent souls. These last three are often named in the tents, as the "*Sahu*" which wears the mummy wrappings, the "*Khaibit*" which is shaped like a fan, and casts a shadow, and the "*Sekhem*" "the reverend form" which is the transfigured and quickened spiritual being. Of these last three little is said in the tents; they belong to that higher nature of man whose functions cannot be described in words. This septenary conception of separate forms or souls, acting on different planes of consciousness and all attached to the physical form or Temple, and all engaged in working out the evolution of the ego, must be borne in mind when considering the story of Sensa. Later in the drama,

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when the little girl has fulfilled her task of making Sensa a man of the world, the young priest Malen appears as again Sensa himself in another form, an inner personality, a more permanent self.

The "little girl" is a favoured servant of Agmabd's; she leads Sensa into places of inexpressible pleasures and she draws him into games where as a matter of course he succeeds beyond his fellows, and "*wins all the prizes.*" Ambition stimulates the soul in this world of consciousness, and from the delightful experiences which befall the soul in that place of bliss, it returns to find itself no longer a free agent on the plane of human life. It has sold itself to ambition and desire and must obey them implicitly; the pleasures of the mind are the payment—some given already, some yet to come, for the "little girl" tells him he

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is to play often with the children. She tells him too that in future he is to dwell among earth-fed flowers—no longer is he to pluck blooms from the lily of the water-tank. And his first punishment is to find himself uttering strange words which to him (the soul) have no meaning, for they appeal only to the lower nature. His inspiration, poured into him from the Queen of Desire, causes him to be worshipped, even by the most splendid of the priests. His brain is not now “frenzied with the follies of his own conceit” to use Agmabd’s words, but he is obedient to the spell laid on him by Desire and his speech gladdens and satisfies the throng of priests who listen to him. All bow down before him; the novices kneel to offer him food; His room is made sweet and beautiful by bushes of earth-fed flowers set about it,

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and great bunches of flowers are brought to him to satisfy his love of beauty and fragrance. Agmabd stands silently within the curtains which seclude the young seer from the other priests, but Sensa is no longer afraid of him. Instead he is glad and proud, for he knows he has satisfied the demands of this cold ruler. And soon Agmabd leaves him, and the "little girl" returns. It is for her now to lead the soul in to the great ordeal. Agmabd knows that she alone can do it, and leaves her to the task, while he summons the crowd of priests to take part in the ceremonial and to prepare the couch covered with roses and hedged about with flowers. Here the "little girl" induces Sensa to play with her at ball, so that he forgets to be afraid. And when the sanctuary door opens the "little girl" leads him to it

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and so brings him to the dark goddess, Avidya herself. He has now been brought to her with such gay companionship that he is not overcome with fear, though the child leaves him. He is alone with the personification of the dark side of human nature. When the goddess draws him to her he perceives that her robe is a living thing, a drapery of coiling snakes. And then terror falls on the startled soul. The dark goddess laughs at his fear and makes her robe dim while she places her hand on his forehead. Then fear left him forever. Again he sees the living robe and beholds the serpents wreathing her body and rearing themselves about her head; but he feels no terror. Doubtless he knows now that the child who has been his merry playmate is one of those terrible serpents. She vanished as he en-

tered the presence of the goddess, going to her own place in the queen's robe. The little girl is *daiva-prakriti*—so is the beautiful woman of the city—they are identical, and both are himself, his own mind, and both are a part of the living robe of the dark queen. It is the souls of men who clothe and veil the presence of the queen of darkness and her living robe changes into such forms as they desire and will to have.

Sensà is worn out with this severe experience and Agmabd, in order to prevent too great a strain, allows Sebona to take him into the garden and to let him bathe in fresh water; but he is not to take him to the lotus tank. This is because he is so changed that he cannot approach the royal flower or the sacred water, but seeks his freedom from imprisonment, his rest

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and refreshment, in the astral fluid. Nevertheless he sees the goddess of truth, who comes to tell him that this mystic water is fed from the sacred tank; and that if instead of sinking in it he rises and kneels upon it, and by another effort rises and stands upon it, he can do so safely, it will support him. But while making these efforts he must address himself to the Logos and demand illumination. How plain a teaching this is to the many who find sufficient pleasure and satisfaction in the experiences of the astral life, and regard these as true gifts of the spirit. But to them the Lady of the Lotus will come, sooner or later, and lift them up as she lifted Sensa up. She does this though she knows that he is about to leave her; but she will not permit him to forget her utterly, and through the dark years that follow, her sweet voice sings

dimly in the obscurity of his brain and her words remain with him and, as he expresses it "cast a strange light upon my wretched life." For Sensa now becomes completely a man of the world, the soul within him being entirely dominated by the two ruling passions of men, ambition and desire. In the company of his own mind, personified as the beautiful woman of the city, he drinks deep of every kind of beautiful pleasure and is utterly happy. And then when Agmabd gives the summons to the great ordeal which awaits him he sees the beautiful woman revert to the shape of a serpent of desire and is once more alone.

Everything connected with initiation is purposely veiled and obscurely stated in all esoteric writings; and so it is in this mystery-drama. But we know that the initiate must gaze into the dark face

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of Avidya and upon the blinding light of the Logos. These ordeals are endured by Sensa and clearly described. He succumbs to the first ordeal and becomes the interpreter and messenger of Avidya herself. But having been able to see the light of the Logos, he is strong enough in the course of the final great trial to make a desperate effort for true freedom and to obtain it. He is depicted as having become inhuman in his ambition and selfish in his desires; and yet the great effort is still possible. But it is only possible at the cost of life itself; Sensa dies in the struggle. The awful Ten drive him forth from his body, which dies, and the temple in which it dwelled is destroyed. It must be remembered that the ten are not homeless when the temple is destroyed. They belong to the five-fold field in which the human soul works out

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its evolution, and they pass into other activities in that field when the soul withdraws. Man, in his physical nature is mysteriously united with the physical universe by means of the five "*tattvas*" which enter into his composition as well as into the composition of all that he dwells amongst.

In the light of Egyptian modes of thought it seems clear that the body of Sena which dies is the personal individuality. This has been so degraded that it has to be sacrificed. The author of the story states explicitly that it is the story of the soul. Isis is the mother of the souls of men, not of their bodies. When therefore at the final fierce ordeal Sena's higher nature asserts itself and he goes into the holy of holies to find the true Queen, the light of the Logos, there, he yields up the dese-

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crated personality. "I am perception," he cries, "the imperishable soul" and at the command of the Queen-mother enters into another of his own forms. In the disintegration of his personality he watches the sparks of life disperse. Ambition flees forth with a rush to feed elsewhere; and the soul of Malen goes to soul-death. Here is a great mystery depicted but still inevitably veiled. All the names used in the Idyll of the White Lotus are words of Hebrew origin, belonging to Aramaic or Arabic idioms and convey ideas which help to explain the characters. Malen has in it the idea of a refuge, or retreat, or a place of recuperation. It was Malen who guided Sensa to the city in order that he should recover his strength. It appears that he was an inner-personality or soul-form which should have guided him to a place

THE STORY OF SENA, AN INTERPRETATION of true recuperation. Having failed in this, and led the human soul astray, Malen himself no longer lives. But Sena can raise up his deserted form and enter into it and use it. It would seem that Malen should have been the "immortal double," for by using this form the "I," the ego who relates the story, is enabled "since then, to live, change form and live again; yet know myself through the long ages as they pass." But he does not say, or imply, that he re-enters any Temple during these long ages, or inhabits any physical body. And indeed it seems evident that he is never again a soul of man, for he clearly states that his mother * would not know him in his new form. He is suffering a great expiation, enduring a great loss, as the result of the terrible conflict through which he

* *Isis.*

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had passed and in which vital parts of his being had been destroyed. But the Queen-mother bids him arise in his new shape, and he finds he is still strong to move among men though he cannot be of them. He has survived the ordeal and is claimed by the Queen-mother as her own; and she gives him his work during the ages, of influencing the hearts of the people—and promises that he shall live to teach her truth in that “new fane that shall arise in the distance of time”—the transfigured form, the “perfect shining one” which shall be his glorified Temple when he has won full liberation.

It must be remembered that the Egyptian held that these various entities, souls, and forms, which go to the making-up of a man, have to be reunited before the transfigured man, the “new fane” can

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be built. The Queen-mother explains that Malen's form is pure and unstained, although his soul is lost. He led Sena to the city and left him there, answering for him to ambition by the sign of a jewel worn by desire. Thus he betrayed him; but he did not himself stay in the city of pleasure. The ego can use this form; but it appears as though the esoteric teaching of this mysterious part of the story is that the soul of Malen must be recovered, revived, and purified, before the "new fane" can be built.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF MAN

| ORTHODOX THEOSOPHICAL | EGYPTIAN | BRAHMINICAL TIBETAN. | AND |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. The Dense Physical Body. | 1. The Ka. | 1. Prakriti. | |
| 2. The Etheric Double. | 2. The Name. | 2. Linga Sharira. | |
| 3. Prana, the life. | 3. The Khou. | 3. Shakti. | |
| 4. The Desire Body. | 4. The Ba. | 4. Javitma. | |
| 5. Manas, the Thinker. | 5. The Khaibit. | 5. Physical Intelligence. | |
| 6. Buddhi. | 6. The Sahu. | 6. Spiritual Intelligence. | |
| 7. Atma. | 7. Sekhem. | 7. Brahman. | |

NOTE.—In the Egyptian Septenary Division of Man, it will be noticed that the physical body is not reckoned at all. The Ka is the astral instrument; the Name is *the man*; the Khou the Perfect Shining One; the Ba the human-headed Bird which visits the Mummy from time to time; the Khaibit the Shadow cast in a life-time, represented by a huge fan; the Sahu the *man himself*; Sekhem the transfigured form.

I understand the Ka to be the astral form, the Khou to be the ethereal form; the Ba to be the spiritual form, the reincarnating ego, "The one who walks"; the Sahu and Sekhem to be "I and my Father" who are one—the ego and the Logos.

M. C.

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